

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method of processing a call, the method comprising:

informing the customers of the telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique sets of symbol headings is normally, but not always, associated with one type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of common 7-digit telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system within each area code of each local area and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device that is connected to the telecommunications system the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique sets of symbol headings plus said common 7-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device other than a voice landline device to the other customers of the telecommunications system;

receiving a sequence of signals representing a specific set of symbol headings plus a specific common 7-digit telephone number that has been dialed by a caller, the combination of the specific set of symbol headings plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number and no other common 7-digit telephone number alone identifying the specific communications device that is the destination for said call; and

connecting said call to the specific communications device that is the destination for said call without the need for the telecommunications system to determine the type of communications device to which the call is directed;

~~thereby providing 7.92 million assignable combinations for landline voice communications devices within each area code, 7.92 million assignable combinations for facsimile, or second landline voice, communications devices within each area code, and 71.28 million assignable combinations for cellular telephone communications devices within each area code, which equals a grand total of 87.12 million assignable combinations available within each area code;~~

~~thereby increasing by a factor of 11 the number of assignable combinations within each area code when compared to the number of assignable numbers available within an area code of a conventional telecommunications system;~~

~~thereby allowing at least the number of area codes to be reduced from 302 to 54 when compared to said conventional telecommunications system;~~

~~thereby eliminating the overlay practice of providing two area codes in a specific local area and requiring customers to dial three extra digits or ten digits to reach a specific communications device within a said specific local area;~~

~~thereby providing three separate and distinct numbering complements consisting of a first complement of common 7 digit telephone numbers for landline voice communications devices, a second complement of 8 digit combinations containing a # symbol for facsimile communications devices, and a third complement of 8 digit or 9 digit combinations containing a * symbol for cellular communications devices, thereby eliminating the extensive processing required by said~~

~~conventional telecommunications system to determine whether a common 7 digit telephone number is being used by a landline voice communications device, a facsimile communications device or a cellular communications device; and~~

~~thereby eliminating the practice of spitting a region of said conventional telecommunications system previously served by an existing single area code into two halves whenever the existing area code reaches its maximum capacity of 7.92 million subscribers, and adding a new area code in one of the halves of the region, forcing one half or 3.96 million subscribers to accept a new 10 digit telephone number containing said new area code, at a great level of inconvenience, stress and cost of changing telephone numbers with the addition of each new area code.~~

Claim 2 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific set of symbol headings is a # symbol and the # symbol plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific set of symbol headings is a * symbol and the * symbol plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the specific set of symbol headings is a digit plus the * symbol and the * symbol plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claims 5-9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) A method of directing a call to a specific communications device, comprising:

announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique symbols is normally associated with a particular type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of common 7-digit telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique symbols plus said common 7-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system; and

receiving a call having been initiated by a caller by dialing a combination comprising a specific unique symbol and a specific common 7-digit telephone number;

determining the destination indicated by the combination, no other common 7-digit telephone number alone indicating said destination ~~without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed~~; and

routing the call to the specific communications device represented by the combination.

Claims 11 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is a pound key and the pound key plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies a specific facsimile machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 12 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is a star key and star key plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 13 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is a digit plus the star key and star key plus said specific common 7-digit ~~specific~~ telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 14 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising directing the call to a cellular processing network if the specific unique symbol and the specific common 7-digit telephone number indicates that the call is being made to a specific cellular telephone.

Claim 15 (currently amended) A system for processing a call made to a telephone number and directed to a specific communications device to which that telephone number is assigned, the system comprising:

means for announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested sets of symbol headings is normally associated with a single type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

means for assigning one of a plurality of common telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said suggested sets of symbol headings plus said common telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a sequence of signals representing a specific set of symbol headings and a specific common telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the sequence of signals being a the sole directory number for the specific communications device, the set of symbol headings immediately preceding the common telephone number, being distinguishable from said common telephone number and together with said common telephone number defining a destination for said call, ~~each common telephone number having at least one destination~~; and

a routing apparatus having a switching component and an identification component for determining the intended destination of the call ~~without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed~~ and connecting the call to that destination.

Claims 16-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (previously presented) A routing system for directing calls to different communications devices having identical common 7-digit voice landline telephone numbers, said system comprising:

an administrative subsystem comprising means for informing the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of symbol headings is normally associated with each type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system and means for assigning one of a plurality of common telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said plurality of symbol headings plus said common telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a network subsystem having routing apparatus including a switching component and an identification component for processing a call to a destination, the call including a sequence of signals indicating a particular one of said plurality of symbol headings and a particular common telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the sequence of signals being a the sole directory number for the specific communications device; and

at least one communications device assigned to a common telephone number;

wherein said particular one of said plurality of symbol headings does not indicate to said routing apparatus that the specific communications device is a particular type of communications device.

Claims 25-34 (cancelled)

Claim 35 (currently amended) In a telecommunications system in which at least some subscribers control a plurality of communications devices, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for accepting a combination comprising a heading and a common telephone number as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

~~wherein said heading does not indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.~~

Claim 36 (previously presented) The system of claim 35 wherein the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is selected from the group consisting of:

another voice landline telephone,

a cellular or wireless telephone,

a facsimile machine, and

a pager.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The system of claim 35 wherein said heading is selected from the group consisting of:

- a first symbol that precedes an area code,
- a second symbol that follows an area code,
- a third symbol that precedes an area code, and
- a fourth symbol that follows an area code.

Claim 38 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said heading is a # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific facsimile machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 39 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said heading is a * symbol and * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 40 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said heading is a digit plus a * symbol and the digit plus the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 41 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said heading is a digit plus a # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific voice landline device with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 42 (currently amended) In a telecommunications system, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for assigning a common telephone number to the particular subscriber;

means for accepting the common telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first voice landline telephone;

means for accepting a combination comprising a symbol and the common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

~~wherein said symbol does not necessarily indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.~~

Claim 43 (previously presented) The system of claim 42 wherein at least one communications device must be in service for each particular subscriber, said at least one communications device being selected from the group consisting of said first voice landline telephone, a facsimile machine and a cellular telephone.

Claim 44 (previously presented) The system of claim 42 wherein the other specific communications device of the particular subscriber is selected from the group consisting of:

another voice landline telephone,

a facsimile machine, and

a cellular or wireless telephone.

Claim 45 (previously presented) The system of claim 42, wherein said symbol is a # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second land line telephone.

Claim 46 (previously presented) The system of claim 42, wherein said symbol is a * symbol and the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 47 (previously presented) The system of claim 42, wherein said symbol is a digit plus a # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific voice landline telephone or another facsimile machine.

Claim 48 (previously presented) The system of claim 42, wherein said symbol is a digit plus a * symbol and the digit plus the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 49 (currently amended) In a telecommunications system, a routing system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber within an area code, said routing system comprising:

means for assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the particular subscriber;

means for accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first voice landline device;

means for accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said other specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

~~wherein said heading does not indicate to said means for routing that the call is a particular type of communication;~~

wherein said caller has the option of using as the heading a # for a facsimile device or a second voice device, a * for a first cellular device, or a 2*, a 3*, a 4*, a 5*, a 6*, a 7*, a 8*, or a 9* for another cellular device; ~~and~~

~~wherein 7.92 million voice landline devices or other devices, 7.92 million facsimile devices or other devices, and 71.28 million cellular devices or other devices are reached with the~~

~~area code, for a total of 87.12 million communications devices of any type being reachable within the area code.~~

Claim 50 (currently amended) In a telecommunications system, a method for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of one of a plurality of subscribers within an area code, said method for routing comprising:

- assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the one of a plurality of subscribers;
- accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the one of a plurality of subscribers, said specific communications device being a first voice landline device;

- accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the one of a plurality of subscribers, said other specific communications device being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

- routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the one of the plurality of subscribers;

- wherein said heading does not indicate to said system that the call is a particular type of communication;

- wherein said caller has the option of using as the heading a # for a facsimile device or a second landline voice device, a * for a first cellular device, or a 2*, a 3*, a 4*, a 5*, a 6*, a 7*, a 8*, or a 9* for another cellular device; ~~and~~

~~wherein 7.92 million voice landline devices or other devices, 7.92 million facsimile devices or other devices, and 71.28 million cellular devices or other devices are reachable with the area code, for a total of 87.12 million communications devices of any type being reachable within the area code.~~

Claim 51 (previously presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

increasing the total number of telephone numbers that are available to said caller in the area code from 7.92 million to 87.12 million without changing the common 7-digit telephone number that is assigned to any of the plurality of subscribers, thereby avoiding the inconvenience, stress and cost to any of the plurality of subscribers of changing that common 7-digit telephone number.

Claim 52 (currently amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

increasing the total number of telephone numbers that are available to said caller within the area code by a factor of 11 without changing the specific common 7-digit telephone number that is assigned to any of the plurality of subscribers, thereby eliminating the present overlay practice of having two area codes in any the same geographic region, which practice requires mandatory local 10-digit dialing of telephone numbers that must include one of the two area codes even if the one area code is the area code of said caller.

Claim 53 (currently amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

routing said telephone call without requiring the caller to dial a 10-digit telephone number within any geographic region having a requirement for no more than 87.12 million telephone numbers, said 10-digit number comprising ~~an~~ a new overlay area code and ~~a new~~ the common 7-digit telephone number.

Claim 54 (previously presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising

accepting a 10-part or telephone number comprising the heading and the common 7-digit telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach a cellular communications device of the one of a plurality of particular subscribers, said heading comprising a two-digit number in the range 20 through 99 plus a *.

Claim 55 (previously presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

increasing the total number of cellular telephone numbers that are available to said caller in the area code to 71.28 million, thereby matching consumer demand for cellular telephone numbers, which is growing at a faster rate than the demand for landline telephone numbers.

Claim 56 (currently amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

encouraging the plurality of subscribers not to use any common 7-digit telephone number as a destination of a facsimile communication or a cellular communication, thereby increasing the number of common 7-digit telephone numbers that are available to said caller as the destination for a voice landline communication within the area code by a factor of up to 3 by

eliminating the need for any common 7-digit telephone number to be used as facsimile machine number or cellular telephone number and allowing the available 7.92 million telephone numbers within each area code to be used as landline telephone numbers.

Claim 57 (currently amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

providing a first complement of telephone numbers that are recommended for use to identify voice landline telephones, a second complement of telephone numbers that are recommended for use to identify facsimile machines and a third complement of telephone numbers that are recommended for use to identify cellular telephones, without affecting the way the telephone call is processed in existing public switched telephone networks; and

eliminating the practice of ~~splitting~~ splitting a region previously served by an existing single area code into two halves whenever the existing area code reaches its maximum capacity of 7.92 million subscribers, and adding a new area code in one of the halves of the region, forcing one half or 3.96 million subscribers to accept a new 10-digit telephone number containing said new area code, at a great level of inconvenience, stress and cost of changing telephone numbers with the addition of each new area code.

Claim 58 (currently amended) In a telecommunications system having 199.1 million residential subscribers, a method for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of one of said residential subscribers, said method for routing comprising:

assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the residential ~~subscribers~~ subscriber;

accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach a first voice landline communications device of the residential subscriber or accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach a cellular telephone communications device of the residential subscriber, said cellular telephone communications device being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

routing said telephone call to the appropriate communications device of the residential subscriber;

~~wherein said heading does not indicate to said telecommunications system that the call is a particular type of communication; and~~

~~wherein implementation of said accepting step reduces the number of 7-digit common telephone numbers that must be assigned to cellular telephone communications devices by 199.1 million when all of said residential subscribers have a cellular telephone communications device, thereby releasing the 199.1 million 7-digit common telephone numbers for other uses~~

thereby releasing the other common 7-digit telephone numbers that are currently in use as cellular telephone numbers for other uses.

Claim 59: (new) In a telecommunications system, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the particular subscriber;

means for accepting the common telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first voice landline telephone; and

means for accepting a combination comprising a symbol and the common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and

means for routing the telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber; and

wherein at least one communications device must be in service for each particular subscriber, said at least one communications device being selected from the group consisting of said first voice landline telephone, a facsimile machine and a cellular telephone;

whereby the particular subscriber's facsimile machine combination and the particular subscriber's cellular combination both include the particular subscriber's common 7-digit telephone number; and

whereby the particular subscriber and no other subscriber can use said particular subscriber's common 7-digit telephone number, said particular subscriber's facsimile machine combination or said particular subscriber's cellular telephone combination as the particular subscriber's sole telephone number as long as any one of them is in service.

Claim 60 (new): In a telecommunications system, a system for routing a telephone call from a caller to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for assigning a first telephone number to the landline telephone of the particular subscriber, a second telephone number to a facsimile machine or second landline telephone of the particular subscriber and a third telephone number to a cellular telephone of the particular subscriber; and

means for routing the telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

wherein all of said telephone numbers comprise the exact same seven numerical digits and no other numerical digits, said second telephone number further comprises a # heading digit, and said third telephone number comprise a * heading digit; and

wherein each specific communications device of the particular subscriber is reachable by the caller's dialing no other seven-digit telephone number.